

DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY AND
EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS, Garden City, Georgia, has experienced an event of critical significance as a result of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic (COVID-19 Pandemic); and,

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency in response to the outbreak of COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp declared that a public health emergency exists in the State of Georgia due to the spread of COVID-19 within Georgia; and,

WHEREAS, the number of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 is escalating rapidly, internationally, nationally, and locally; and,

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the President of the United States stated that any gathering of over 10 people should be discontinued or prohibited; and,

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, Governor Kemp announced that “certain individuals with an increased risk of complications from COVID-19 [were] to isolate, quarantine, or shelter in place,” covering those who “live in long-term care facilities, have chronic lung disease, are undergoing cancer treatment, have a positive COVID-19 test, are suspected to have COVID-19 because of their symptoms or exposure, or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19”, and that the Department of Public Health would institute rules and regulations to implement such measures; and,

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, Governor Kemp additionally announced measures to “close all bars and nightclubs and ...ban all gatherings of ten or more people” unless they can assure spacing for at least six (6) feet apart between people at all times beginning at noon on March 24, 2020 and lasting until noon on April 6, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, public health experts, including those at the CDC and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have advised that individuals infected with COVID-19 are contagious even while experiencing minor or no symptoms and implored leaders to take immediate action to prevent further community spread of COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. o’clock, the Garden City Mayor declared an emergency in the City and set forth deliberate measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Garden City and to prevent or minimize sickness and injury to people and damage to property within the City resulting from the virus, and on March 25, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. o’clock, the Mayor re-declared an emergency based on the continuing and increased threat of the disease; and,

WHEREAS, within a 24-hour period from March 26, 2020, to March 27, 2020, the confirmed number of COVID-19 cases in Georgia rose from 1,643 to 2,198; the number of Georgians hospitalized from COVID-19 rose from 509 to 607; the number of deaths in Georgia from COVID-19 increased from 56 to 65; and, the mortality rate in Georgia of those found to have the virus rose to 3.2%, about twice the national average; and,

WHEREAS, in the judgment of the Mayor, there are now additional emergency circumstances within the City in connection with the increasing risk of the spreading of COVID-19 which require that the corrective actions set forth in the Mayor's initial Declaration of Local Emergency on March 22, as restated in the Mayor's second Declaration of Local Emergency on March 5, 2020, remain in place to assure the safety, health and well-being of the citizens of Garden City;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me by local and state law;

IT IS HEREBY DECLARED that a local state of emergency again exists in the City and shall continue until the conditions requiring this Declaration are abated or until the Declaration expires as a matter of law.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED as follows:

1. Emergency management operations shall continue to be carried out by the Garden City Emergency Management Department as well as by the Chatham Emergency Management Agency pursuant to that certain Local Emergency and Disaster Mutual Aid Agreement with Chatham County dated on or about April 16, 2016, and by that certain Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement by and between the City, Chatham County, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security dated on or about April 16, 2016, as re-executed for renewal on February 2, 2020.
2. In addition, the following measures shall be implemented effective 5 o'clock p.m. on March 28, 2020:
 - (a) All required resources of Garden City shall be made available to assist in activities designed to address this emergency, to control the spread of COVID-19, and to aid in recovery efforts.
 - (b) All indoor recreation, fitness, and entertainment facilities are to close immediately and shall remain closed until such time as the state of emergency has been lifted or amended.
 - (c) All public gatherings of 10 or more people are prohibited.

(d) Residents are urged to practice “social distancing” as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (the “CDC”). Social distancing is the most effective manner of stopping the spread of this emergency. To the extent feasible, it is in the best interest of Garden City residents to not gather in crowds of 10 or more in any location except in an authorized, official government capacity.

(e) Any person showing symptoms recognized by the CDC as indicators of COVID-19 shall refrain from entering public buildings, restaurants, shops, public transportation facilities, and all other areas where the public ingresses or egresses. Such person should seek medical attention and follow the directions of their primary care physician until given the clearance to return to public interaction.

(f) All businesses which possess a license to operate as or otherwise meet the definition of a “Bar” as defined by Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 3-1-2(2.1) shall cease operation while this Declaration is in effect.

(g) All eating establishments within the City shall reduce indoor seating capacity and shall additionally ensure that such seating is sufficient to achieve 6-foot social distancing among those customers within the establishment. Restaurants that cannot achieve the 6-foot social distancing are ordered to close. Restaurants capable of providing delivery, take-out or drive through services are encouraged to increase these services and avoid in-house dining as much as possible.

(h) Eating establishment regulations prohibited in Subsection (g) above shall not include cafeterias located within medical, industrial, government or other such production facilities that are performing essential functions that are necessary to promote health, welfare and vital resources in Garden City. These facilities are strongly encouraged to stagger meal times, limit use as much as feasible to achieve social distancing, and to thoroughly follow CDC protocols of cleaning.

(i) All houses of worship shall strive for density reduction in all services, whether scheduled or based upon a life event such as a funeral or baptism, and wherever practical shall practice social distancing. Houses of worship are further encouraged to use social media or other video outlets to broadcast worship services. Funeral homes shall likewise strive for density reduction in activities, and shall ensure that vehicles used to transport families will be thoroughly cleaned between uses in accordance with CDC guidelines. Graveside services of 10 or less participants are highly encouraged.

3. Telecommuting and operating as a single member home office with no clients or customers is not a violation of residential zoning.

4. Any city ordinance in conflict with this Declaration is temporarily suspended during the Declaration of Local Emergency period, unless otherwise amended in writing.

5. Punishment for the violation of this Declaration of Local Emergency and Executive Order is outlined in Section 1-13 of the Garden City Code.
6. This Declaration is issued based on evidence of the increasing occurrence of COVID-19 within Chatham County and throughout the State of Georgia, scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically, and evidence that the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of Garden City places it at risk for serious health complications including death, from COVID-19.
7. This Declaration is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 16, 2020, Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Brian Kemp, and the Executive Orders of the President of the United States.
8. This Declaration comes after the release of substantial guidance from the CDC, the Georgia Department of Public Health, and other public health officials throughout the State of Georgia, the United States, and around the world, including a variety of prior orders to combat the spread and harms of COVID-19.
9. The emergency measures set forth in this Declaration shall be in effect for 72 hours or until the next regular, special, or called meeting of City Council, whichever is earliest, but may be re-exercised and extended by the Mayor for additional emergency periods upon subsequent declarations of emergencies being made based on the continued assessment of the quickly evolving situation.

ENTERED at 5 o'clock p.m., on this the 28th day of March, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Bethune". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and "B".

DON BETHUNE, Mayor